



HUMAN  
RESOURCE  
PROGRAM

Sorry -

This was attached to one of the survey forms. Since the individuals went to some effort, I thought you should see it. Mostly general comments (generally negative) and few suggested modifications. Written by a GS-15 Division chief.



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"WORKING SO OTHERS MAY SUCCEED"

## Comments on the HRTF Report

While I'm sure that the features of the HRTF Report could be implemented in the Agency over time, I'm concerned that they are being perceived as a panacea for more fundamental problems. The Report advocates the introduction of a new "system". I don't believe the "system" is as important as the uses and abuses of that system. The proposed system will be as subject to abuses as the current system. If we're going to expend a lot of energy let's expend it on the important things and not on developing and learning new "mechanics".

Systems which are designed to reward employees for their performance are by definition subjective. The difficult task for all of us is to make sure that the system is treating employees as fairly as possible. The HRTF proposals are not necessarily going to do a better job than today's systems. I am particularly concerned that the HRTF Report sidesteps one of the main issues (implementation of incentive pay) with the following: "The proposed design is to distribute the decision for the size of the reward to the lowest practical level. Preferably, the decisions would be made through a ranking process by a panel on which the employee's supervisor serves." I don't think that the HRTF stand on this is strong enough. While there may be some exceptions which must be made, I think it is absolutely mandatory that the panels for incentive pay be "management panels". If these proposals are going to serve their purpose then a great deal of latitude and control must be placed in the hands of individual supervisors. There is a serious problem in this area in OIT today because of the "peer panels" which were instituted a couple of years ago. There is no way for OIT managers to give practical input to the ranking of their employees. Consequently the findings of the panels are becoming increasingly flawed. There is a great deal of work that needs to be done in this area at least in this Office. If we can't define and implement a fair panel system then there's no point in introducing incentive pay. First things first.

I got fairly incensed by some of the Report's findings on the current mechanisms for rewarding employees. "The private sector generally makes much more effective use of permanent salary increases and bonuses to reward the performance of employees than we do at CIA, even though provisions exist within the GS structure to reward performance of employees in much the same way that the private sector does. Combinations of budget and bureaucracy have made delivery of these rewards within the GS system much less widespread and effective." The proposed system is not going to help the budget aspect of this problem. LET'S FIX THE BUREAUCRACY, NOT CREATE A NEW ONE. It goes on, "For example, GS-13s through GS-15s in CIA received only one-tenth the cash value of the awards for the same grade levels in government agencies that use Merit Pay, and the Merit Pay system is not generous by private-sector standards." Perhaps the Task Force should have first examined why that is. I personally know of a case in which a GS-14 who had made a substantial contribution to the Agency was nominated

for a cash award, but it met with considerable opposition and was either substantially reduced or not awarded at all (I can't remember) because the Office director at the time did not believe in cash awards for GS-14's.

There are several references in the HRTF Report to the need for placing power in the hands of managers. "Thus, these managers would have the authority to adjust dynamically position structure and the number of personnel in their components provided they meet predefined budget criteria." "Under the proposed system, managers would have more flexibility to shape their work force and reward their employees, but along with increased authority would come increased accountability." I believe that these are desirable objectives and in fact would improve our ability to manage our resources, however, it is totally unclear to me why these problems can only be addressed by introducing a new "system". (And in fact I'm very concerned that by the time a new system gets put in place these objectives will have been lost in the trees.) Why can't we address these problems in the framework of of the GS or modified GS system? What is really gained by managing a T/O by dollars instead of by points? Is there going to be any more money to get the job done? I think not. Again why expend our energies on new "mechanics"?

I am in total disagreement with the Report's view that automation, and particularly of a "Performance Plan" will result in better communications between the supervisor and the employee. I've been through LOI's and AWP's in this Agency. They haven't failed because there wasn't automation. In fact many components essentially did what the Report proposes. The LOI's and AWP's became "buzzword forms" with little significance. I think the decision that was made earlier regarding AWP's was a good one, i.e. if either the supervisor or employee sees a need for it, write one (and by the way the form it takes is not important), else assume that the communications are good and the piece of paper will not add anything.

While the cost estimates were not provided to employees, it's clear to me that this is no free lunch and I'm not just talking about the measurable costs. I'm really concerned about the hours of energy that managers and employees will expend in learning and making a new system work. I think we would be better served by focusing in on some specific problems that we experience today, working to address those problems within some modified version of today's GS system, and concentrating our energies more directly on the Agency's mission.

In summary, as a manager I asked myself the following questions: Will the new system help me hire more employees when I'm over T/O (or should I say over budget)? No. Will the new system keep an Office from taking on more work without the resources to go with it? No. Will the new system get staff or contractors through the clearance process faster? No. Will the new system give an Office of  employees more than five slots for the Program on Creative Management? No. Will the new system reward employees more fairly? I think not.

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